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CONGRESS AND THE FUTURE OF NATO;
PUBLIC OPINION AND CONGRESSIONAL DECISION MAKING

Karen Aguilar
Prof. Stafford
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In democracies the formulation of foreign policy, or any policy, is complicated by the need for elected officials to consider the impact of public opinion on their political futures, rather than simply the impact of the policy on relevant conditions and events. Elected officials, and their political appointees, are exquisitely exposed to the pressures the public can bring to bear, as well as to the press and the media which can rouse that opinion. Democracy demands not that our leaders make the right decisions, but that they be perceived by the public to be right. Obviously even the most successful foreign policy maker needs to be aware of his real constituency. There is little doubt who would have won the recent contest for U.S. presidency, for example, had the electoral college been filled with other world leaders. This is a tricky business, (as the French government has just discovered) but one managed differently here than in Europe, where party platforms and party discipline offer more protection to the career of the individual politician, but can turn out a government almost overnight.

Now, with the advent of the new American administration, one of the issues under consideration in both Europe and the United States concerns the future of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. All of the members are democracies, which means that the future of the alliance depends not only on the policies proposed by the leaders of these countries, but on the opinions held by the voting publics. In much of Europe, where loss of a vote of confidence in parliament can change national leadership immediately, as well as in the United States, where congressmen need to run for reelection twice as often as presidents, the volatility of public opinion is most immediately felt in the legislative branch. These things are generally understood by politicians who endorse, if not always by strategists who devise, public policy. What is often not understood is the way public opinion is shaped and the real relationship between public opinion and public policy.

The truth is that public opinion on the future of NATO needs to be reexamined carefully, particularly by congress, before policies are promulgated in reaction to commonly held intuitive assumptions about the electorate's demand for radical response to the changes brought about by the fall of the Soviet empire. Congress will be an especially critical player in framing the debate at this point because of the lack of a clear Clinton administration foreign policy agenda. The Clinton emphasis on the economy and other domestic issues was marked throughout the campaign and continues to dominate the current administration priorities. So far it appears that this will yield a foreign policy based largely on continuity with the previous administration, for lack of strong executive branch initiatives towards redirection.¹ This leaves a larger role for the legislative branch by default. In so doing it should avoid misinterpreting demands for response to the Soviet decline and desire for realizing a peace dividend as a mandate to turn increasingly away from NATO. It would also be well advised to examine the nature and quality of public support for U.S. participation in NATO among European peoples, before reacting to some European, particularly French, policy makers' pressures for a Europeanized security structure.

There is at present considerable debate, widely covered in the press and constantly addressed in periodical literature, concerning the future of NATO and the security structure of Europe absent the Soviet threat.² Almost all of it starts with the assumption that because the specific conditions that caused the alliance to be formed forty years ago have changed substantially, the alliance must change substantially as

¹Manfred Woerner returned to NATO following his discussions with President Clinton with the expectation that the U.S. would try to maintain 100,000 troops in NATO rather than aim for 75,000 as commonly expected or feared. He reported no significant departures from existing U.S. NATO policy. Although early yet, the foreign policy team assembled does not display extraordinary zeal for reform or overhaul of existing policies.

²See David P. Calleo's *NATO: Reconstruction or Dissolution?* for a discussion which encapsulates much of this debate.

well. The only question truly debated seems to be, how drastic a change?. Those who suggest that the change should be moderate, often lament that that option is probably not possible because the public demands dramatic spending reductions, and that congress will be forced to reduce U.S. participation in NATO to meet that public demand. The assertion is so often made that one would be excused for supposing the issue enjoyed a high degree of public salience and even consensus. One might even be pardoned for supposing a radical reformer could claim to have a mandate.

In reality, extensive sampling of public opinion indicates that there is no groundswell of public dissatisfaction with, or demand for radical change or reduction in, NATO, either in the U.S. or in Europe. Furthermore, such public opinion as does support change has been, and could be even more substantially, influenced by the way in which national leadership and the media have framed the public debate. This is extremely important, because its true implication is that leaders in most alliance countries have a relatively free hand when it comes to formulating policy regarding the future of NATO, providing they take the debate public in such a way that the issues are well defined and the public educated in the process. Leadership should not allow the media to frame the debate, but should take the initiative to structure the debate in terms comfortable to the public. If leadership possesses substantial credibility and exploits it in support of this effort, foreign policy can be formulated with greater regard for the future of the country and less fear for the future of the politician.

In the United States public opinion does not translate directly into recommendation for foreign policy. The American public is, in reality, extremely responsive to leadership on such issues. Public opinion generally signifies only a level of concern or the perception that a problem exists. It usually signifies no specific preference or recommendation for specific actions.

"Publics simply do not derive from international developments implications for public policy. Publics leave such interpretation to their political leadership. It is not the case that publics are spontaneous in this way; they do not wake up one morning and say "Well, the Berlin Wall is gone, therefore, be gone NATO."³

Americans depend upon their leaders to make specific foreign policy recommendations, and public opinion reflects response to the perceived success or failure of policies. Unfortunately, since foreign policy rarely wins congressional districts, most leaders are reluctant to spend political capital to lead public opinion in the foreign policy arena that they may need to use on domestic issues which will bring them political support.

In truth few Americans have strong opinions about NATO or know much about it. Most Americans have heard of NATO. Most think NATO is a good thing. Most think NATO works. Hardly any want to get rid of it, most think it could be reduced if our leaders think that's a good idea, but wouldn't suggest it otherwise. Beyond that, the interpretation of data becomes more complicated, but not necessarily more specifically instructive for policy formulation.⁴ As congress tries to interpret public opinion, they should consider more precisely how it works, or they risk making foreign policy errors in the service of a non-existent public demand. There are several intuitive assumptions about public opinion and NATO, and several congressional assumptions about ways to accommodate that opinion which bear examination. These are: The public knows and cares nothing about NATO, but has strong opinions about

³Steven Wagner, Chief, West European Branch, Office of Research, United States Information Agency, remarks to Congressional- Executive Dialogue, October 9-10, 1991. *NATO's Future: A Congressional-Executive Dialogue*, edit. Stanley Sloan, Catherine Guicherd, Rosita Thomas, Congressional Research Service, January 1992. p.46

⁴CBS News/New York Times Poll. May 9-11, 1989 "Have you heard of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization --called NATO?; Gallup Poll, July 1989 "Should NATO alliance be retained?" Thomas, *op cit*

it nevertheless. Since NATO was formed to defend against a Soviet threat, and that threat is diminished or perhaps gone, NATO should go. Since NATO is a foreign military alliance, and we no longer need much military or care much about foreign affairs, it should suffer huge cuts to help the domestic economy.⁵

These perceptions matter because if NATO has no constituency among American taxpayers then there is no pressure on congress to support it either. Seizing on the decline of the Soviet Union as a justification, raiding NATO's budget, and eliminating U.S. troops stationed in Europe would ease the pain of domestic spending cuts or tax hikes, and lower the numbers of military bases closed in congressional districts. The danger of being labeled "soft on communism," no longer gives congressmen an incentive to protect the defense budget.. The logic may be irresistible. On the other hand, Americans tend to be conservative on the issue of defense, and public opinion is volatile, responding immediately to perceived threats and uncertainty in the world situation.⁶

⁵ The United States Information Agency is responsible for the conduct of public diplomacy for the United States, and has made a practice of sampling public opinion throughout the world in both democratic and non-democratic countries.

In October 1991, USIA and the Library of Congress organized, at the request of Senators Sam Nunn and John W. Warner, and Representatives Les Aspin and William Dickinson, Chairmen and ranking minority members of the Senate and House Armed Services Committees, multi-day dialogue on the Future of NATO for Executive and Legislative branches with both U.S and European participants. Many of the insights into the debate between policy makers and the temper of public opinion were gleaned from transcripts and materials prepared for the conference; quotes and page references are from the Congressional Research Service transcript ed. by Stanley Sloan, Catherine Guicherd and Rosita Thomas. The tables were compiled and distributed at the conference by Rosita Thomas of the Congressional Research Service.

⁶ Witness the spectacular shift in public opinion concerning defense spending before, during and after the attempted Soviet coup in 1991. The current crisis in Russia may well provoke a similar reversal.

The leader catering to public opinion without having thoughtfully framed the debate on an issue, is in the greatest danger of being caught by the swinging pendulum. If he has framed the issue properly, he can shift quickly without being thought to be vacillating. For example, if he has based his objections to military spending on the grounds that only the Soviet threat justifies a strong military, then he can safely support military expenditure only if the Soviet threat returns. If other threats later demand military expenditure, then he is vulnerable to charges of inconsistency or shortsightedness unless he stubbornly clings to now unsafe policies. This has happened most recently with hints that the Clinton administration will suggest to congress that they slow cutting of the military budget in light of terrorist attacks in the U.S. and the uncertainty of Yeltsin's future in Russia.

If one has framed the debate in terms of threat-based response, then one has the freedom to respond to the shift in public perception of a threat. There was no threat and now there is one, spend accordingly. But the safest field on which to base a truly responsive policy is an interest-based defense policy, which allows for even greater latitude in defense priorities and expenditures. Unfortunately it is also the least compelling, and most vulnerable to demands for budget cuts. As any world leader knows, the easiest time to generate support for defense is usually during war itself, or the period of greatest perceived threat to national survival. It does not necessarily follow, however, that peacetime support for the military will be weak. Much depends upon how much the public believes prudential military strength contributes to the keeping of the peace.⁷

Public support for military spending usually dips immediately after wars, because the public usually believes that it can no longer be as necessary. Support for the idea of

⁷See appendix A.

future military intervention often dips as well. In peacetime in general the idea of fighting is not very congenial to the American public, but it never goes away completely. As the 1990 table below demonstrates, a little less than half of the U.S. public was willing to go to war for just about anything, while support from leadership ranged from 87% if Soviets invaded Western Europe, to 7% to stop revolution in the Philippines.

Percentage of Americans favoring the Use of Force in Various Scenarios

	Public	Leaders
If Soviet troops invaded Western Europe	58%	87%
If Iraq invaded Saudi Arabia	52%	89%
If government of Mexico were threatened by revolution or civil war	48%	19%
If the Soviet Union tried to overthrow a democratic government in Eastern Europe	44%	29%
If North Korea invaded South Korea	44%	57%
If Arab forces invaded Israel	43%	70%
If Iraq refused to withdraw from Kuwait	42%	55%
If Japan were invaded by the Soviet Union	39%	73%
If the government of El Salvador were about to be defeated by leftist rebels	28%	13%
If the government of the Philippines were threatened by revolution or civil war	22%	7%

During and after hostilities, public support often soars twice as high as support ratings prior to hostilities. But even military success does not make future military intervention more attractive. After the stunning success of Desert Storm, the public was asked "Does success in the Persian Gulf War make you feel the U.S. should be

more willing to use military force in the future to help solve international problems?" 60% said no. Asked if they should intervene militarily elsewhere in the future, 46% said that the U.S. should and an exceptionally high percentage of 30% refused the choices offered and volunteered "It depends." Only 20% said no.⁸

Public opinion polling like the one above shows that there is a dramatic gap between what Americans think and what their leaders believe. This naturally leads politically sensitive leaders to test the waters frequently, since they cannot rely on their own opinions as guides to popular wisdom. This makes properly interpreting public opinion all the more important. No doubt aware of our treaty obligations to Western Europe, 87% of the nations leaders would be willing to go to war in defense of Western Europe in the event of Soviet invasion. A mere 58% of the public agreed. Does this reflect a lack of commitment to our NATO obligations, or a simple unawareness of them? Only 43 % of the public would support using force if Arabs invaded Israel. Yet 48% would go to war if the government of Mexico were threatened by revolution, as opposed to only 19% of their leaders. Clearly this public opinion would be a pitiful guide to policy makers.

If I were a European, the 58% support figure for U.S. military intervention in the event of a Soviet invasion of Western Europe might well give me pause, but then no military action in the last decade enjoyed overwhelming public support more than a

⁸Does success in the Persian Gulf War make you feel the U.S. should be more willing to use military force in the future to help solve international problems?

Yes	32%
No	60%
Not Sure	8%

few days before the actual outbreak of hostilities. This change of heart is effected by the efforts of leadership to articulate the justice of the cause and justify the risk of shedding American blood on foreign soil. Desert Storm was an excellent example of this. By the time the first missile struck Iraq, Bush had done a superb job of persuading the originally reluctant U.S. public that war was the only instrument of foreign policy remaining in our arsenal. Supported by an international coalition and U.N. imprimatur, Bush led the people through the debate to embrace his position.

With regard to most of the rather surprising positions in the table above, such as the apparent intention to abandon our treaty obligations to Japan in the case of invasion, or the public's willingness to leave Israel to her own devices if invaded by Arab countries, or their surprising willingness to equate our obligations to South Korea with unarticulated obligations to Eastern Europe, treaty partners need not despair. The same instructive dialogue and debate would soon educate the public about American commitments and American interests, and they would soon consolidate public support for the use of force. This is an historical reality.

By the time hostilities are concluded successfully public support has often doubled. From the moment hostilities seem possible to the moment they are initiated two things happen, the public begins to focus their diffuse attention on the defense issue at hand, and they take their cues from the national leadership. At such times the government has an absolute obligation to lead, rather than follow, public opinion. The government must articulate its strategic and policy goals so clearly that the justice of the cause is unassailable. The public will slowly begin to conform its opinion when leadership successfully fulfills this obligation.

Lets look at the results of several different opinion polls on NATO and foreign affairs

and defense policy to begin to paint an accurate picture of public opinion. Polling is only one way to evaluate public opinions. The media is also a shaky gauge of public opinion, but is a powerful influence on it which deserves to be studied carefully. (Letter writing and phone calling are traditional indexes of public opinion for politicians, although they usually recognize the self selecting nature of the writers skews the sampling somewhat. It is usually a reliable index of the degree of a subject's salience, however.) More recently taking a reading of public opinion from radio and television talk shows has been so common that there are now whole industries designed to generate a burst of "spontaneous" support or indignation on any given subject.⁹ Lobbyists and pressure groups are extremely unreliable indicators of public opinion, the intensity of whose activities and funding are often inversely proportional to the number of voters they represent. Indeed, when engaged by foreign interests they may represent no voters in this country at all. Random sampling of opinion is generally believed to be the most reliable method of gauging public opinion, but the framing of the question is every bit as important as framing the terms of the political debate in determining the answer to the question. Bearing that in mind lets look at the following:

What does the public know or care about NATO?

Does it have strong opinion about its existence?

Does the public understand that NATO was formed to meet a Soviet threat? Does the public agree that threat is gone?

Does the public want to reduce military obligations to NATO?

⁹Just how extreme and manipulated this particular form of pressure has become is documented in the excellent front-page story in the Washington post of March 16. Lobbying organizations with tele-marketing techniques inundate media and organizations with calls whipping up spontaneous "outrage" hoping for a Zoe Baird -like impact on opinion conscious legislators. They can generate every appearance of a genuine groundswell of public opinion for at least a few days, in the hopes that this will sufficiently influence the public to take up the cause on their own, or force political action before the chimera is detected.

Does the public demand deep cuts in NATO's budget?

Does the public demand a reduced political involvement in NATO?

And with some of these answers, let's examine the implications for formulating public policy, particularly at the legislative level.

In the first place it is quite true that the American public is not as concerned about NATO and foreign policy in general as about most domestic issues. But they are aware of many problems and concerns in a general way; unless there is a problem, Americans have little interest in foreign affairs. A look at the issues which most Americans followed closely in the news during the last ten years shows that while 80% of the public followed the Space Shuttle explosion story in 1986, and 69% followed the story of the little Texas girl who fell down the well shaft, only 50% followed the opening of the Berlin wall in 1989 (see appendix B). Of the top 20 stories followed by Americans during this period, eight involved the Gulf War. The only other issues involving foreign affairs among the top twenty were the invasion of Panama and the air strikes against Libya. It should be obvious that the real message here is that unless their fellow Americans are at risk (risking blood or treasure) on foreign soil, the American public has little interest in foreign affairs.

It should also be obvious that unless things have already escalated to a crisis level, most Americans do not concern themselves with foreign affairs. It is also significant that not one of the top twenty stories is directly related to the Soviet threat to U.S. security, or directly involves the Soviet Union except for the fall of the Berlin wall. Nearly half of the most closely watched stories involved military or defense issues however. None are directly related to NATO, with the possible exception of Berlin as well.¹⁰

¹⁰See appendix B.

Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to suppose from this that Americans did not support NATO and understand the importance of countering the Soviet military threat. In 1981 72% of the American public identified the Soviet Union as the biggest threat to world peace, in 1991 25% still did.¹¹ This did not, however, cause them to pay close attention to any issue directly involving the Soviet Union. They were not, however, unaware of the developments, or the percentage of those identifying the USSR as the greatest threat to world peace would not have shifted nearly 50 points in a single decade. It is not simply a long term trend-line downward reflecting a general slipping of the issue from consciousness; there is also great sensitivity to dramatic changes in the level of tension regarding the USSR.

During the August coup attempt in 1991, 71% of those polled believed there was either a great deal or a good deal of danger that "the Soviet Union will go back to the hard-line communism it practiced before." By September following the failure of the coup attempt, that number had dropped to 31%. (I believe that this event might well have made the top twenty had the list not been compiled a month before it happened. Significantly, however, nothing less dramatic than this captured the public's imagination.)

One of the indexes of the public's concern over the USSR, was the degree to which they felt the US was capable of protecting itself. In the same year, 1990, that 65% of the people claimed the USSR was not a threat, 87% of the public claimed the US was either stronger or equal to the USSR in military power. Asked if the changes in Eastern Europe have implications for U.S. troops in Europe, only 23% feel they are less important. 58% feel they are just as important and 18% feel they are even more

¹¹Washington Post/ABC News Poll September 1991 and September 1981. "If you had to name one nation that you might consider the greatest threat to world peace, which nation would that be?" Thomas, *op cit*

important. Nevertheless, 10% feel they should leave Western Europe, 29% feel the number should be decreased, 4% feel they should be increased and only 47% feel the numbers should remain the same.¹²

Here is a revealing bit of poll taking however: A different poll taken in the same time period obtained a very different result by first informing the respondents of the terms in which the political debate was framed. First the question informed them of the number of troops currently in Europe "Currently the United States has about 300,000 troops in Europe." Then the listener was told that "President Bush has proposed that both the United States and the Soviet Union reduce their troops to just under 200,000." The question goes on to inform the listener that "Others in Congress favor reducing troops to 100,000." Only then does the poll ask "What is your preference?" The response is spectacularly different. 75% then say that U.S. troops should be reduced to either 100,000 or 200,000, but only 2 percent believe all troops should be removed. The voters clearly altered their response to conform to leadership when informed of the terms of the debate. The information that U.S. troops would be reduced only to the level of Soviet troops could also have had an effect in supporting the reduction. Those who favor the reduction to the 100,000 identified with congress' proposal, might well have changed their position if told that the USSR would not reduce their strength to the same level, and those favoring 200,000 might have done so only because they thought parity was the right idea, and might go for 100,000 if told the Soviets would have that number or fewer as well. The point is, that they respond to the political debate, and rely on leaders to supply it.¹³

There is a very real danger to the political process if the political leadership, which

¹²see appendix C.

¹³"NBC News/Wall Street Journal Poll, telephone poll March 10-13, 1990 Thomas, *op cit*

tends to be better informed on policies and international events than the public at large, takes its policy cues from public opinion before leaders frame the debate. The role of the media here is also often misunderstood. The media most often brings the debate to the public after the politicians have framed the debate, taken positions and allowed the debate to become news. If some crisis, disaster or embarrassment makes the issue newsworthy before the debate is framed, the media takes the lead in framing public opinion. Unfortunately, when the media reports on an event which provokes a strong reaction in the public, it is then too late to start to debate. The public may form a premature opinion, which when reported in the media will shape political opinion, rather than the reverse.

While this makes for exciting journalism, it makes for poor policy. The issues which truly captivate the American public in the media are very rarely those which they consider to be the most important. 69% reported that they closely followed the rescue of the "little girl in Texas who fell down a well," which has no policy implications of any kind, foreign or domestic, and had no impact on anyone outside a small circle of family and friends, while only 50% closely watched the opening of the Berlin Wall. Only 50% of those polled watch news about U.S. foreign relations, yet 73% reported that U.S. foreign policy has a major impact on our overall economy at home, and consider economic issues to be the most important facing the U.S.¹⁴

That being the case one would expect that economic issues would dominate the top twenty news stories that people "watched closely" during the last several years. But this is overwhelmingly not the case. The only economic issue to make the list is the increase in gasoline prices. The October 1988 stock market crash did not make the

¹⁴Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, ed. John E. Reilly, *American Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy* 1991, p. 26. Thomas, *op cit*

list, neither did a single incident involving Japan, although 72 % of the people polled said they thought that the economic threat from Japan was more serious than the Soviet military threat. Given this low level of interest in "closely following" foreign affairs, how do Americans make up their minds on issues?¹⁵

I believe we can look at the framing of the political debate on NATO, and use this to make some predictions about public opinion and the future of U.S. policy. In 1964 72% of the public had heard of NATO, but by 1989 this had risen to 79%. Only 60% knew that the U.S. was a member, 13% did not know and 6% were sure it was not. Only 50% knew Germany was a member, and a stunning 40% *did not know Russia was not a member*.¹⁶

We remember from earlier tables that 42% of the public would not be willing to use force to defend Europe from Soviet attack. This level of familiarity with the specifics of the alliance should be kept in mind when evaluating questions about troop strength and defense budgets. It partly explains the radical differences in response to the same question when information on an issue is supplied to the respondent. In some cases that information may be all the information the voter has upon which to base his decision:

"Have You heard of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization -- called NATO?"

	1989	1964
Yes	79%	72%
No	20%	28%
Don't Know	1%	--

¹⁵Harris Poll, March 1991

¹⁶CBS News/New York Times Poll, May 9-11, 1989. telephone interview with 1,073 adults. Thomas, *op cit*

"I'd like to ask you whether several countries are members of NATO or not, is the .

	YES	NO	Don't Know
United States a member	60%	6%	13%
Russia a member	21%	39%	19%
West Germany	50%	9%	20%

In 1989 75% of the public thought NATO should be retained. In 1990 56% of the public thought we should keep our commitment to NATO about the same. Only 35% of the leaders polled felt the same way. This is an interesting difference. It certainly cannot be said that the leadership is merely responding to the public demand for a reduction in our commitment to NATO, since it would appear that their shift in opinion predated the public's by a good deal. It would be unfortunate indeed if the leadership did not truly believe that this commitment should be reduced, but did so for political reasons. This would short-circuit the political process.

The issue of defense spending is the one which most obviously affects congress, since it is they who control the purse strings, and the one clearly identified source of public pressure to effect change with regard to NATO. The intuitive assumption is that absent the Soviet threat, and under pressure of an ailing economy, the public demands a whopping peace dividend to avoid slashing domestic programs or raising taxes.

While the public does expect to see defense spending cut, the public has been in favor of reducing the defense budget since 1982. There was no dramatic surge in numbers calling for a cut, but a steady increase from 41% in 1982 to 50 percent in 1990 wishing to reduce military spending.¹⁷ There was a sharp decline in the number of those wishing to cut defense spending during the tense days of the attempted coup,

¹⁷See appendix D.

with 47% suggesting that arms reductions move more slowly, and 38% suggesting that defense spending be reduced by 10% instead of the planned 25%. By the end of the week, however, with the coup foiled, the number suggesting arms reduction move more slowly had dropped to 27% from 47%, demonstrating the extreme volatility of public opinion on such issues, as well as signifying the extent of public awareness of defense related incidents, if not familiarity with defense related issues. This suggests that pushing defense cuts very rapidly could prove awkward for congressmen if a new threat were perceived to emerge.

"Should the U.S. move more slowly in arms reductions?"

	Monday (during coup)	Tuesday (post-coup)
Move more slowly	47%	28%
Move at same speed	33%	52%
Move more quickly	16%	15%

One very interesting survey asked respondents to rate the arguments put forward for reducing or not reducing spending on defense of western Europe. (Bear in mind that these questions were asked in 1990 and that other polls would indicate that for most respondents, the information contained in the questions themselves may have provided the total sum of their knowledge about the issues). 87% of the public agreed with the assertion that "We have more important problems here at home to spend money on." 84% agree somewhat or strongly that "Western Europe can afford to pay more for her own defense." 59% agreed that "The new governments of Eastern Europe are no longer a military threat to Western Europe." On the other hand this did not stop the same group from agreeing 79% with the argument that we should NOT reduce spending on defense of Western Europe because "We cannot be sure of the changes

taking place in Eastern Europe so we should wait a while longer before we start making any significant reductions in our military strengths in western Europe." 60% agreed that "Unlike us, all the people of Western Europe would be on the front lines of a European war, so our fair contribution is to give our allies the military forces they need to defend themselves." Only 36% felt that "Reducing our spending on the defense of Western Europe would destroy the NATO alliance."¹⁸

By 1991 49% of one sample agreed that the U.S. should go ahead with current plans to cut U.S. military spending. When half of the group was asked "Do you think the changes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc countries mean that the United States can make major cuts in military spending without endangering our security, or not?" only 39% answered yes. This suggests either that they do not consider current cuts to be major reductions, or that they like the idea of saving money, but when confronted with the possible consequences, have second thoughts. Once again it also reminds us that the more information the voter is given, the more it shapes the opinion offered.¹⁹

"I think in many cases people respond to what the leaders say. They find that they would like to achieve a result, but until someone articulates the problem and a possible solution, perhaps they're willing to preserve the status quo. And so, if people are desirous of continuing our NATO membership and not moving to some untested arrangement, I think that that may be an easy position for the President to maintain."²⁰

Let's move on to European opinion, often cited by policy makers as evidence that our participation in the alliance is not really appreciated by our allies, and which is often

¹⁸See appendix E

¹⁹Washington Post Poll August 28 - Sept. 1, 1991

²⁰Peter Kelley, remarks during *"NATO's Future, A Congressional-Executive Dialogue"* October 9, 1991. p. 52

misrepresented or misunderstood in the debate. During the 1980s there was indeed a general sliding of support for NATO which is commonly believed to have resulted in the demand for a truly European security arrangement without reliance on the United States. It is also believed that, As Steven Wagner of USIA points out

When we look at [European] public opinion our perception is distorted by three intuitions. These are

that the Soviet threat was the adhesive which held the alliance together and that without it West European publics are unwilling to sustain defense preparedness;

that publics insist their security organizations demonstrate change in pace with international events;

that the removal of the immediacy of the Soviet threat has given vent to long-simmering dissatisfactions with the Alliance.²¹

In 1991 the USIA conducted a phone survey and found that a high of 76% in Britain believed that NATO was essential to their security. Earlier in the year only 19% of Britains (the highest percentage in Europe) believed that the Soviet threat was the greatest security threat. Was the attempted coup truly responsible for such a dramatic shift? Or does the disparity between these numbers mean that Europeans believe that NATO exists to serve some security concern other than the Soviet? Britain and France chose the Middle East as their main concern. Germany maintained that there is no threat to their security from any country. Why then would 68% of Germans describe NATO as essential to their security?²²

It seems probable that NATO fills a security need not easily articulated. Philippe

²¹Steve Wagner, *op cit.*p.44

²² *ibid* p.48

Manigart describes it as the affective support, rather than the utilitarian support for security arrangements. Affective support is

"the emotional and probably diffuse orientations based on reactions to a rather vague idea of the collective organization. It is related to the perceived legitimacy and popularity of, and loyalty to, the institution. It is not related to the existence of a Soviet threat. Utilitarian support, on the contrary, implies some cost-benefit analysis on the basis of perceived and rather concrete interests." ²³

The Eurobarometer studies demonstrate that there is widespread affective support for NATO throughout Europe, but somewhat more limited utilitarian support, particularly when specific policies are examined.

Does NATO require a Soviet threat? European support for NATO is at its highest point in two decades, at precisely the same time the Soviet threat is declining. Why? Partly because the public rewards things that work with their affective loyalty. NATO is a success, and as the world begins to show signs of instability in the wake of the Soviet collapse, proven sources of stability become more popular. NATO was a single threat organization, but it was never meant to be a single interest organization. Many of those interests now assume a more compelling aspect, and an organization which advances them merits popular support.

First the basic goals of U.S. European security cooperation, absent a Soviet threat, can continue to draw on the positive values that for over four decades have been the wellspring of the transatlantic alliance. . . promoting; the principles of democracy; individual liberty and respect for human rights and the rule of law; peaceful relations among states; and the development of international economic collaboration. None of these goals is ensured simply by the end of the Cold War. The opportunity in the post Cold War era is that of

²³Philippe Manigart, Address to Congress, *"The Future of NATO, Congressional-Executive Dialogue,"* p.48

devoting more political attention and financial resources to promoting, rather than defending, these objectives.²⁴

In addition there are the "latent goals" of NATO which still receive wide support including providing a framework for involving the United States in the security of Europe; neutralizing German power; and discouraging re-nationalization of European defense policies. These do not depend on a Soviet threat, and they continue to enjoy widespread European support as well. "There is nothing inevitable about a decline in public support for NATO" absent the Soviet threat, "Support for NATO rests on a different very solid base: the commitment, the prudential commitment to maintain a strong national defense even in the absence of a clearly defined threat."²⁵

It appears then that the support demonstrated for NATO is not limited to the specific international events which prompted its creation forty years ago, but is related to the success enjoyed by the alliance and the organization themselves. That is the daily reality that people respond to, as well as its symbolism. NATO is not just a security organization it is a security blanket, well worn and loved by those who grew up with it.

One thing is also clear, and that is that European publics have a much higher awareness of NATO than American public and are far more conversant with the

²⁴Stanley Sloan *The Future of U.S. European Security Cooperation*, Congressional Research Service, December 4, 1992

²⁵J. Steven Wagner, remarks during *"NATO's Future; a Congressional-Executive Dialogue."* October 9, 1991, p. 48.

specifics of NATO policy and structure. There are certain differences in the nature of the support for NATO between the U.S. and Europe which could cause fundamental conflict or misunderstanding. There is a tug of war between the United States and France on the issue of NATO. Germany, like Laocoon, is immobilized and increasingly fatigued in between. France does not wish to be fully integrated into a security arrangement dominated by the U.S. and the U.S. does not wish to be involved with European security without a leadership role. The reunification of Germany and Europe's failure to deal with Yugoslavia seem to have added new enthusiasm to France's willingness to integrate itself into a strong European security arrangement provided Germany is at least as securely fixed.

French policy pundits strongly favor a Europeanized security arrangement. In France itself, however, public support for NATO has never been stronger. 68% of the French public supports NATO, and considers it "essential" to their defense. 70% of the French public supports maintaining U.S. troops in Europe. Doubtless the reunification of Germany has infused new life into the French affection for NATO, but in general when Europeans are asked to choose between "NATO, a Europeanized alliance, a CSCE-like organization . . . , or neutralism. . . very substantial majorities favor . . . NATO and in particular, the U.S. participation." Next in popularity is the CSCE. Few indeed support a completely Europeanized alliance.²⁶

This bring us to the basis of the greatest support for NATO in Europe, which is the

²⁶Wagner, *op cit* .46

notion of NATO as an insurance policy. Manfred Woerner describes NATO as a pillar of stability, a transatlantic link, community of destiny, core of Euro-Atlanticism, strategic counterweight and finally "as insurance against all other risks."²⁷

In his assessment of the sources of "Instability and Risk in the Post Soviet World," Josef Joffe identifies the dual risk of either future Russian strength, or future Russian weakness, Yugoslavia, ethno-nationalism, thirdly proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The editor of the newspaper Sueddeutsche Zeitung, Joffe articulates the nature of the European public's support for NATO as well as anyone has ever done in the following quotation from his remarks to congress.

"Europe ought to want some insurance against all of these threats and risks. . . There are two insurance policies on the market. One is . . . called WEU. . . On paper it is an excellent alliance because it has been concluded for 50 years and its obligations for mutual assistance are much tighter, more automatic than NATO. But WEU is an alliance on paper only. . . [lacking] a command structure, it lacks logistics. It does not have a functioning military force, and we can see in the Yugoslav case that it is not capable of real action.

The other insurance policy. . . CSCE. . . has a membership. . . with a spectrum extending from tiny Luxembourg to huge Russia, from neo-communist regimes like Romania to a sterling but remote democracy like Canada. . . And the CSCE has had its chance in Yugoslavia. Yet could not act because there are too many heterogenous members who insist on unanimity.

What would work? Personally, I would want a relatively small group of allies. . . reasonably like minded. . . to share similar political, economic systems; . . . stable democracies. I want them to have a tradition of security cooperation -- meaning common maneuvers, integrated force structure, training a backlog of experience. And I want this small group of nations to be tied to the United States in a very intimate way.

²⁷Manfred Woerner, *The Future of the Atlantic Alliance*, Delivered to the Joint Congressional Executive Dialogue on the Future of NATO, October 9, 1991.

What do we call this group? It's called NATO. And though I started out on this very pessimistic note about the logic of alliances, I'll go against my own logic in conclusion by saying: Since there is nothing better on the security insurance market, let's stay with what has worked so well for 40-odd years."

All the European opinion surveys are simply statistical support for precisely this sentiment, which is widely supported in the European media as well.²⁸

He also articulates European sentiment on two other questions, Why should Europe want the United States in their security alliance?

"It's not just a matter of "heavy lifting." All the Europeans, east and west, have always felt quite comfortable, and will continue to. . . with a power in the system which is not tied to them by hundreds of years of enmities and rivalries, but remote and yet in place. And which is a power stronger than anyone else acting as a kind of guarantor-- providing security for each and all, and against each and all." ²⁹

Although there are a number of European political commentators who suggest that in

²⁸"*West European Press Looks at New U.S. European Relationship in Trade and Security.*" This analysis is based on USIS Post reporting of major West European press January 3 -March 25, 1992. Draws on 220 editorials, commentaries and analyses appearing in 47 papers or 13 countries. . . The papers supported a NATO that still included an American presence even if its mission was redefined or the U.S. troop contingent diminished. Denmark's conservative Berlingske Tidende said typically: "Everybody knows that Europe's defense is unthinkable without the participation of NATO and the U.S." These papers also said that the world is still a dangerous place, despite the collapse of the Soviet union, and the Europeans have shown a lack of agreement on a unified, Europe-centered defense. Sweden's conservative Svenska Dagbladet added: "Those who tell the Americans to go home should consider carefully whether this is what they really want." . . Germany's leftist Die Zeit said "As long as the U.S. provides reliable protection against the remaining nuclear risk in the east, any weakness by the last superpower will have implications for Europe's fate as well. Despite all claims to the contrary, the E.C. will not stand on its security policy feet for a long time to come. U.S. troop presence remains inevitable." Foreign Media Analysis, USIA April 8, 1992

²⁹Joffe, *op cit* p.33

view of the inevitability of U.S. withdrawal from Europe, Europeans should seek a U.S.-free European security structure like the WEU, nowhere in Europe do the publics support the WEU. Although the EC is an extremely popular organization, and a majority of Europeans would like to see its cooperation expanded to security policy, even in countries which are hostile to NATO, like Greece and Spain, or indifferent like Portugal, the WEU is not more popular than NATO. If Spain were forced to choose between existing choices, second choice after keeping the status quo would be neutrality.³⁰

That being said it is also important to point out that Western European countries also believe that the United States has too much influence on their countries. Particularly in an economic and political context, they are eager to assert their sovereignty and their independence. France is merely an extreme expression of a sentiment shared to some degree by most European publics. This has been partly ameliorated over the years by the recognition that the U.S. takes up a greater portion of the burden shared than any other member. This is important for U.S. policy makers to bear in mind. Europeans may react very badly to signals from U.S. Congress that we expect to lead the alliance without being the leading contributor. As Joffe says "If you want to run something then I guess you have to do most of the lifting. It's an old story of organizational sociology. If you want to run something you have to contribute a disproportionate share."³¹

If Congress feels pressured to slash the U.S. contribution to NATO, as it did the infra-structure budget last year, cutting it by nearly two thirds, it will not be feeling that pressure from the American public or the Clinton Administration. Although both

³⁰Wagner, *op cit* p.47

³¹Joffe, *op cit* p.33

Aspin and Clinton have assured NATO that they will make an effort not only not to cut the budget, but to restore some of the funding cuts, NATO has no powerful constituency in Congress. Spending cuts must be made, and NATO seems a safe target in the post Soviet age. Without the U.S. there is no real NATO logistical capability, no airlift capability, only a much more limited military capability. Unfortunately the political debate may already have been framed, and the battle launched upon the terrain least favorable to NATO's health and survival.

This could well be the sad and completely unnecessary fate of NATO at the hands of Congress. NATO's friends should come to its defense, if not to save it, then to ensure at least that the political debate that makes the final determination on policy is framed in terms most likely to yield the shrewdest balance between the competing economic and security interests. Can Congress support spending on NATO during this critical period of transition without taking too great a political risk? If asked to give advice to Congress or the administration on support for NATO, one could hardly do better than cite Steven Wagner's exhortation

If you are to make it your business to sustain public support for NATO I would say that you need to watch the rhetoric in the political arena, and not worry about the public spontaneously rising up against you. Instead of worrying about NATO's vulnerability to shifts in public opinion, worry about an erosion in that prudential commitment to be ready for the unforeseen on which support for NATO ultimately rests. If public support for the Alliance does erode in coming years, it will be for that reason.³²

³²Wagner, op cit p .48

APPENDICES

Appendix A	How much of a threat is the Soviet Union? Who is Stronger Militarily: US or USSR
Appendix B	Public attentiveness to Major News stories 1986-1991
Appendix C	Is the time right for major defense cuts?
Appendix D	In general, do you favor increasing or decreasing the present defense budget, or keeping the same as it is now?
Appendix E	Reasons to Reduce Spending on Defense of Western Europe. Reasons NOT to reduce spending on defense of Western Europe.
Appendix F	Polls on Use of Force Panama, Grenada Iran and Iraq
Appendix G	Should NATO alliance be retained?

The polling data in these appendices were assembled by Rosita Thomas of the Congressional Research Service, and were distributed to participants in conjunction with the conference on "The Future of NATO," in October 1991. These few tables are a small selection from her extensive collection.

**POLLS ON SECURITY THREATS AND THE
THE DECLINE OF THE SOVIET THREAT**

Table 4. How Much of a Threat is the Soviet Union?

January 1988 to March 1990

"How much of a threat would you say the Soviet Union is to the United States these days--a very serious threat, a serious threat, a minor threat, or not a threat at all?"

	Very Serious	Serious	Minor	Not a Threat
	%	%	%	%
March 1990	7	26	49	16
December 1988	9	35	44	10
June 1988	18	42	29	8
April 1988	17	36	32	12
January 1988	16	41	32	8

Market Strategies for Americans Talk Security. Feb. 10-March 2, 1990. N=1,000 adults nationwide. Source: The Polling Report, May 21, 1990, p. 3.

Table 5. Who is Stronger Militarily: US or USSR?

1979 to 1991

	U.S.	USSR	Equal	Not sure
	%	%	%	%
6/91	44	9	43	4
10/86	25	22	45	8
11/85	21	24	44	11
5/82	11	41	40	8
12/81	13	38	39	10
7/80	6	57	28	9
4/79	17	37	39	7

NBC News/Wall Street Journal. [The results are based on nationwide random telephone surveys with registered voters.]

APPENDIX: AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION
AND FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES⁴

POLLS SHOWING AMERICANS ARE INCREASINGLY INTERESTED
IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Table 1. Public Attentiveness to Major News Stories 1986-1991

(News events where 50% or more of the public followed
the event "Very Closely")

The examples listed in italics below refer to foreign affairs events.

Percent who followed very closely:

- | | |
|----|--|
| 80 | Explosion of the Space Shuttle Challenger (July 86) |
| 73 | Destruction caused by the San Francisco earthquake (Nov 89) |
| 69 | Little girl in Texas who was rescued after falling into a well (Oct 87) |
| 67 | <i>The War's end and the homecoming of U.S. forces from the Gulf (March 91)</i> |
| 66 | <i>Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and the deployment of U.S. forces to Saudi Arabia (Aug. 90)</i> |
| 63 | <i>Iraq's occupation of Kuwait and the deployment of U.S. forces to the Persian Gulf (Oct 90)</i> |
| 63 | <i>Iraq's occupation of Kuwait and the deployment of U.S. forces to the Persian Gulf (Sept 90)</i> |
| 62 | <i>Iraq's occupation of Kuwait and the presence of U.S. forces in the Persian Gulf (Nov 90)</i> |
| 62 | Recent increases in the price of gasoline (Oct 90) |
| 60 | <i>Invasion of Panama (Jan 90)</i> |
| 59 | <i>Iraq's occupation of Kuwait and the presence of U.S. forces in the Persian Gulf (Jan 91)</i> |
| 58 | <i>U.S. air strikes against Libya (July 86)</i> |
| 57 | <i>The plight of the American hostages and other Westerners detained in Iraq (Sept 90)</i> |
| 57 | Recent increases in the price of gasoline (Aug 90) |
| 56 | Recent increases in the price of gasoline (Sept 90) |
| 53 | Crash of a United Airlines DC-10 in Sioux City, Iowa (Aug 89) |
| 52 | Alaska Oil Spill (May 89) |
| 51 | <i>The release of American hostages and other westerners from Iraq and Kuwait (Jan 91)</i> |
| 50 | <i>Opening of the berlin Wall between East and West Germany (Nov 89)</i> |
| 50 | Flight of the space shuttle (Oct 88) |
-

Times Mirror Center for The People & The Press, *Times Mirror News Interest Index*, July 18, 1991.

⁴Prepared by Rosita Maria Thomas, Analyst in American National Government, Congressional Research Service, and Coordinator, Congressional-Executive Dialogue on NATO's Future.

Table 21. Implications of Changes on U.S. Troops?

March 1990

"What do you think the changes in Eastern Europe and in the Soviet Union mean in terms of the importance of having U.S. military forces in Europe—are they MORE important, LESS important, or about the SAME importance as before?"

Less important	23 %
Same importance	58
More important	18
Don't know	1

Americans Talk Security, The U.S. Looks at the Revolutions of 1989, Survey #13, Report No. 2. April 16, 1990, p. 35. [The results are based on telephone interviews with 1,000 adults completed under the direction of Market Strategies, Inc. The interviews were conducted between February 19 and March 2, 1990.]

Table 22. Level of U.S. Troops in Western Europe?

March 30-April 2, 1990

"Should the number of United States troops in WESTERN Europe be increased, kept at the same level, decreased, or eliminated entirely?"

Increased	4 %
Kept same	47
Decreased	29
Eliminated	10
Not sure	9

New York Times/CBS News Poll. [The results of the survey are based on telephone interviews with a national sample of 1,515 adults, aged 18 and older, contacted during the period March 30-April 2, 1990. The margin of error is 3 percentage points.]

Table 30. U.S. Opinion on Defense Cuts in Light of Coup

August 28, 1991

"Prior to the recent events in the Soviet Union, the United States had planned to reduce its military spending by about 25 percent by the year 1995. In light of the recent events in the Soviet Union, do you think the United States should reduce its military spending by a smaller amount in the neighborhood of 10 percent, by about the original amount of 25%, or by a larger amount in the neighborhood of 40 to 50 percent?"

Smaller amount of 10 percent	38 %
Original amount of about 25 percent	44
Larger amount of 40 to 50 percent	13
Not sure	5

NBC/Wall Street Journal Poll. [The results are based on nationwide telephone interviews with 800 registered voters contacted on August 28, 1991. The margin of error is]

Table 31. Volatility in American Opinion on Defense Cuts

August 22, 1991

"Should the U.S. move more slowly in arms reductions?"

	Monday (during coup)	Thursday (post-coup)
Move more slowly	47 %	28 %
Move at same speed	33	52
Move more quickly	16	15

USA Today Poll conducted by Gordon S. Black Corp. [The latest results are based on telephone interviews with a nationwide sample of 617 adults contacted Aug. 22, 1991. The margin of error is 4 percentage points.]

DEFENSE SPENDING

Table 28. Defense Spending

1976-1990

"In general, do you favor increasing or decreasing the present defense budget, or keeping it the same as it is now?"

	Increasing	Decreasing	Keep it as now	Not sure
	%	%	%	%
Apr 90	3	53	42	2
Feb 90	11	41	46	2
Aug 89	10	40	46	4
Jul 88	14	31	53	2
Jul 87	22	28	49	1
Oct 86	23	25	49	3
Oct 85	26	21	51	2
Jun 83	22	33	42	3
Oct 82	17	24	54	5
Aug 81	58	16	22	4
Feb 80	71	6	21	2
Oct 79	58	9	30	3
Nov 78	50	9	38	3
Dec 76	25	27	38	10
Mar 76	10	44	36	10

Harris Poll. [The latest results are based on 1,255 telephone interviews with a nationwide cross section of adults contacted between April 26 and May 1, 1990. The margin of error is plus or minus 3 percentage points.]

Table 29. Defense Spending

1969-1990

"There is much discussion as to the amount of money the government in Washington should spend for national defense and military purposes. How do you feel about this? Do you think we are spending too little, about the right amount, or too much?"

	Too Little	About right amount	Too much	Don't know
	%	%	%	%
1990	10	35	50	5
1987	10	36	44	6
1986	13	36	47	4
1985	11	36	46	7
1983	21	36	37	6
1982	16	31	41	12
1981	51	22	15	12
1976	22	32	36	10
1973	13	30	46	11
1971	11	31	50	8
1969	8	31	52	9

Gallup Poll. [The results of the latest survey are based on 1,226 telephone interviews with a nationally representative sample of adults contacted between January 4-7, 1990. The margin of error is plus or minus 3 percentage points.]

Table 32. Reasons to Reduce Spending on Defense of Western Europe

March 1990

"Here are some reasons why some experts say we SHOULD REDUCE spending on the defense of Western Europe. For each one please tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree."
(Questions were rotated)

	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Depends	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
We have more important problems here at home to spend money on	62 %	25 %	1 %	6 %	3 %	1 %
Western Europe can afford to pay more for its own defense	46	38	1	7	2	5
The Soviet Union is no longer much of a threat to Western Europe	18	41	2	21	15	2
The new governments of Eastern Europe are no longer a military threat to Western Europe	19	40	1	25	8	7

Americans Talk Security, The U.S. Looks at the Revolutions of 1989, Survey #13, Report No. 2. April 16, 1990, p. 37. [The results are based on telephone interviews with 1,000 adults completed under the direction of Market Strategies, Inc. The interviews were conducted between February 19 and March 2, 1990.]

**Table 33. Reasons NOT to Reduce Defense Spending
in Western Europe**

March 1990

"Here are some reasons why some experts say we **SHOULD NOT REDUCE** spending on the defense of Western Europe. For each one please tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree."

(ROTATE)

"We cannot be sure of the changes taking place in Eastern Europe so we should wait a while longer before we start making any significant reductions in our military strength in Western Europe."

Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Depends	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
41 %	38 %	1 %	13 %	5 %	2 %

"Gorbachev could be replaced by a Soviet leader who is hostile to the United States and Western Europe."

Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Depends	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
35	37	1	15	9	3

"Unlike us, ALL the people of Western Europe would be on the front lines of a European war, so our fair contribution is to give our allies the military forces they need to defend themselves."

Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Depends	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
18	42	2	21	15	3

"Reducing our spending on the defense of Western Europe would destroy the NATO alliance."

Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Depends	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
8	29	1	34	16	11

Americans Talk Security, The U.S. Looks at the Revolutions of 1989, Survey #13, Report No. 2. April 16, 1990, p. 38. [The results are based on telephone interviews with 1,000 adults completed under the direction of Market Strategies, Inc. The interviews were conducted between February 19 and March 2, 1990.]

POLLS ON USE OF FORCE PANAMA, GRENADA, IRAN AND IRAQ

Table 52. Composite of Pre and Post Polls on the U.S. Use of Force in Panama, Grenada, Iran, & Iraq

	Approve	Disapprove	Other
PANAMA			
<u>Pre Invasion</u>			
NBC News/WSJ June 6-12, 1988 use troops to overthrow Noriega	38 %	46 %	16 %
CBS/NYT May 9-11, 1989 send troops if violence erupts	45	40	15
Harris May 12-16, 1989 going to war	28	69	3
Newsweek October 5-6, 1989 use troops to invade and overthrow	26	67	7
<u>Post Invasion</u>			
Los Angeles Times 12/21/89 approve/disapprove of President's decision (97% answered)	77	15	5
Newsweek Dec. 21, 1989 U.S. justified?	80	13	7

	Approve	Disapprove	Other
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GRENADA

CBS/NYT

Oct. 26-27, 1983
sending troops

55	31	14
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Harris

Oct. 28-31, 1983

68	26	6
----	----	---

WP/ABC News

Nov. 3-7, 1983

71	22	7
----	----	---

New York Times

Nov. 11-20, 1983

56	35	9
----	----	---

IRAN HOSTAGE RESCUE ATTEMPTABC News/ Harris Poll
4/24/91

70	24	6
----	----	---

Gallup
4/26-27/80

71	18	11
----	----	----

CBS
4/26-27/80
(asked only of those
who had heard of U.S.
attempt 94%)

66	26	8
----	----	---

COMPOSITE OF POLLS ON THE USE OF FORCE IN IRAQ PRIOR TO WAR

Table 52. Polls on the Use of Force Prior to Iraq War

	Yes	No
War or no war (W.Post/ABC News Poll; Jan. 2, 6, 9 & 12, 1991)	62-68 %	29-32 %
(W.Post/ABC News Poll: Dec. 2, 9, & 18, 1990)	55-63	30-38
(W.S. Jour./NBC News Poll: Dec. 8-11, 1990)	54	34
(Gallup Poll: Dec. 6-9, 1990)	53	40
(Gallup Poll: Dec. 6-9, 1990)*	62	33
War or wait and see (Gallup Poll: Nov. 16, 1990)	24	70
(Gallup Poll: Dec. 6-9, 1990)	46	47
(N.Y.Times/CBS Poll: Dec. 9-11, 1990)	45	48
(Post/ABC News Poll: Jan. 9-12, 1991)	47	49

*Question included information on U.N. Resolution sanctioning military action.

Table 53. Was Iraq Situation Worth Going to War For?

Jan. 1991 to July 1991

"All in all, was the current situation in the Mideast worth going to war over, or not?"

	Yes	No	Not sure
7/91	66 %	28 %	6 %
5/91	72	23	5
4/91	70	24	6
3/91	80	15	5
2/91	71	24	5
1/91	46	44	10

* In January and February 1991 the question wording was "All in all, is the current situation in the Mideast worth going to war over, or not?"

Gallup Poll. [The latest results are based on nationwide telephone interviews with a random sample of 1,217 adults contacted between July 11-14, 1991. The margin of error is 4 percentage points.]

PUBLIC OPINION POLLS ON NATO

Table 35. Should NATO Alliance Be Retained?

July 1989

"The relations between Russia and the West have been changing over the last few years. Both Russia and NATO have taken away and destroyed several types of nuclear weapons. Do you think the NATO-alliance should be maintained or is the alliance not necessary anymore?"

	NATO should stay	Not stay	No opinion
	%	%	%
United States	75	10	15
Netherlands	81	15	4
Canada	78	8	14
Great Britain	71	15	14
Belgium	69	13	18
Luxembourg	69	10	21
West Germany	63	13	24
Italy	58	18	24
Turkey	50	14	36
Denmark	43	13	45
Spain	30	34	36
Portugal	26	9	65

Gallup Poll. [The results of the survey are based on 1,247 telephone interviews with adults contacted between July 18-21, 1989. The margin of error is plus or minus 4 percentage points. In each of the 11 other countries, the results are based on 1,000 interviews, except in Luxembourg where 321 adults were interviewed. The survey was conducted in consultation with the Atlantic Treaty Association, which promotes the ideas and principles behind NATO.]